

OLD FAITHFUL

A Symbol of Our National Parks



Soon a towering column of water will surge out of the earth as Old Faithful continues its unbroken series of eruptions. The eruptions occur 20-23 times per day every day, year after year. Other great geysers have been dormant for months or years between their periods of activity. Old Faithful has never stopped. Other geysers erupt to greater heights, but at erratic intervals. Old Faithful is regular enough that careful observation of an eruption enables us to predict the time of the next one with an accuracy of 75%.

Try timing an eruption. Then you, too, can predict the time of the next eruption. If the eruption is short, lasting about 2 minutes, then 45 to 55 minutes will pass before the next eruption will begin. If the eruption is a long one, lasting 3 to 5 minutes, the next eruption will usually follow in 70 to 85 minutes.

What makes a geyser work? It is a matter of three things — water, heat and a plumbing system strong enough to withstand the pressures that are generated during an eruption. The water has been heated by contact with hot rock deep underground. As the hot water rises, steam bubbles form, then grow larger, pushing water above them as they rise, forcing it out of the geyser vent. Pressure is reduced on water further down in the geyser tube, just as if the safety valve on a pressure cooker had blown. Boiling then starts at many points in the geyser system, producing steam so rapidly that it forces the water above it out of the geyser tube, producing an eruption.

Vital Statistics:

Height of eruption: 106-184 ft. Average: 130 ft.

Shortest interval between eruptions: 33 min.

Longest interval between eruptions: 148 min.

Av. interval (1973, May through Oct.): 67 min.

Temperature: 204°F just before an eruption.

(Water boils at 199°F at this elevation.)

Gallons of water in an eruption: 5,000 - 7,000.

Elevation here: 7,366 feet above sea level.

For details about Old Faithful, we recommend "The Story of Old Faithful", by George D. Marler. That booklet and others about Park features are available at the Visitor Center.

For your safety and to protect the delicate features of the geyser basin, **stay on the boardwalks.**

THINGS TO DO in the Old Faithful Area (May - October)

Visit the Old Faithful Visitor Center where you can:

1. Obtain information and answers to your questions.
2. Obtain predicted eruption times for Old Faithful and several more geysers.
3. See the 9-minute free movie on geysers and other thermal features.
4. View weather, seismograph, and special outside exhibits.
5. Read bulletin board for schedules of naturalist-led activities.

LOCAL HIKING OR WALKING TRAILS: **Please Note:**

Pets are **not permitted** on posted trails, boardwalks, or asphalt walkways. For your safety and protection of fragile features, you **must** stay on designated pathways when in or near thermal areas. No fires or overnight camping permitted except in designated backcountry campsites **by permit only**.

TRAIL or WALKWAY	Roundtrip Distance from Visitor Center		
	Hours	Miles	Kilometers
Old Faithful Geyser Loop . . .	1/2	0.7	1.1
Geyser Hill Loop	1	1.3	2.1
Observation Point Loop	1-1/2	2.1	3.4
Morning Glory Pool	2	2.8	4.5

The above trails are shown on the map titled "Guide to the Upper Geyser Basin" which is available for 15¢ from boxes located near where you obtained this leaflet, or from the Visitor Center. The following are other Old Faithful area trails which can be reached by driving or walking:

TRAIL or WALKWAY	Roundtrip Distance from Trailhead		
	Hours	Miles	Kilometers
Black Sand Basin	3/4	0.6	1.0
Biscuit Basin Loop	3/4	0.6	1.0
Mystic Falls	1-1/2	2.4	3.9
Fern Cascades Loop	2-1/2	3.0	4.8
Lone Star Geyser Loop	4	5.0	8.0
Fairy Falls and Imperial Geyser	5	6.2	10.0
Mallard Lake	1 day	7.1	11.4

Bicycles are permitted on trails so indicated on the "Guide to the Upper Geyser Basin" map plus portions (primitive) of the Fairy Falls and Imperial Geyser Trail and the Lone Star Geyser Trail. For more information on these, other trails, and backcountry camping, inquire at the Visitor Center or Ranger Station.

CONCESSION FACILITIES: Old Faithful Inn and Old Faithful Lodge with overnight lodging, restaurants, curios, etc.; Snow Lodge with cabins, curios and cafe; two gasoline stations; quick food service and shower building; two general stores; photo shop; post office; limited medical service at Old Faithful Inn. **Please note** that full services are available **only** from mid June through August; partial to no services for remaining months.